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A Criticism of the Madras Conference from the Standpoint of a Christian Believer

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A CRITICISM OF
THE MADRAS CONFERENCE
FROM THE STANDPOINT OF A CHRISTIAN BELIEVER

A Thesis Presented to the
Faculty Of Concordia Theological Seminary

in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Divinity

by

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INTRODUCTION

In the closing moments of the year 1938 there was held in Madras, India, a meeting of the International Missionary Conference. This gathering was not a mere Conference. It was the official meeting of the International Missionary Council. The International Missionary Council is an interdenominational body. The delegates who attended the sessions at this conference were not the representatives of their respective church bodies. They were appointed by the constituent bodies of the International Missionary Council.

Just what is the International Missionary Council?

"It is the body which weaves together for united thinking, planning and action the various National Christian Councils throughout the world, and these in turn are the creatures and servants of the church."¹

There are thirty-four bodies that belong to the International Missionary Council. These bodies are of two kinds, first, the National Christian Councils in the various countries of Asia, Africa, Oceania, and Latin America, representing the churches and missions in each area. In the second place, there are the national missionary organizations in the countries that send out missionaries. Among these are the Foreign Missions Conference of America, the Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain and Ireland, and the German Evangelical Missionary Conference. In the latter class, the constituent elements are not churches, but missionary agencies such as missionary boards and committees.

Officers of the International Missionary Council are elected for a period of ten years. The following officers were elected at Madras. Dr. John R. Mott, of New York City, a Methodist layman,

¹Religious Digest, v. 8, 42, p. 57.

was re-elected chairman of the International Missionary Council. Six vice-chairmen were elected: Bishop James C. Baker, of San Francisco (Methodist); the Bishop of Winchester, England; the Bishop of Dornakal, India; the Baroness van Boetzelaer van Dubbeldam, of Holland; Miss Yi-Fang Wu, Nanking, China; and Dr. Knut B. Westman, of Sweden. Dr. A. L. Warnshuis, of New York, and the Rev. William Paton, of London, were re-elected secretaries; and the Misses D. D. Gibson, of Lond, D. H. Standley, of London, and Esther B. Strong, of New York were re-elected assistant secretaries. S. Frederick Telleen, of New York, was elected treasurer. Dr. J. Merle Davis was re-elected director of the Department of Social and Economic Research, his office being located in New York.

The meeting at Madras was not the first meeting of the International Missionary Council. As early as 1910 there was a meeting of the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh where cooperation and unity between churches was discussed. The next great meeting of this body was held at Jerusalem in the year 1928. This conference was much smaller than the one at Madras, and here the older churches, i.e., the sending churches were predominant among the representatives. Besides these two meetings of the International Missionary Council, there were two ecumenical meetings held in the year previous to the Madras meeting, in 1937. These were the World Conference on Life and Work at Oxford, and the World Conference on Faith and Order at Edinburgh. The Madras meeting was followed by the World Conference of Christian Youth Movements at Amsterdam in the year 1939.

The meeting of the International Missionary Council with which we are primarily interested was held in Madras, India. The meeting

had been originally scheduled for Hangchow, China. However, war conditions in China caused the leaders to transfer the meeting to India. The planning for this Conference was done three years before the meeting actually took place. During these three years, extensive preparations were made. This extensive and stimulating work which was done in advance was one of the most productive features of any conference. When the meeting then opened, the delegates had already thought through their respective topics and were more ready to discuss them intelligently.

The place in which the meeting of the International Missionary Council was held added much to the atmosphere and the spirit of the meeting. In the first place, the land of India itself seemed to be the ideal country in which to hold such a meeting. In that land there is to be witnessed a great deal of the beauty, the grandeur, and the majesty of the work of God in nature. India is a land of tradition. It is the home of one-fifth of the population of the world. Christianity is a religion which is not foreign to India. It ranks there as one of four or five of the oldest of the many faiths which are to be found there.

Just outside of Madras, in this country, there is to be found in the village of Tambaram the campus of the Madras Christian College, where the meeting took place. "The buildings of the Madras Christian College provided an absolutely ideal setting for such a gathering. The Central Assembly Hall, the administrative and teaching blocks offered completely adequate accomodation for all the meetings and all the demands for offices, while the three halls--St. Thomas, Selaiyur and Heber will now be remembered gratefully to the ends of the earth--gave every delegate a room to him or herself, and the whole great

block of buildings with trees and open spaces wrapped the Meeting round in an atmosphere of beauty and peacefulness."²

The method by which the meeting did its work can be stated simply. The central theme of the Conference was the upbuilding of the younger churches into the historic, universal Christian community. The things that were discussed at the meeting covered a wide range, but they may be summed up into five grand divisions:

- (1) The Faith By Which The Church Lives (two sections)
- (2) The Witness of the Church (four sections)
- (3) The Inner Life of the Church (five sections)
- (4) The Environment of the Church (four sections)
- (5) Cooperation and Unity (one section)

From this it will be seen that the whole conference was divided into sixteen sections. When each delegate arrived, he or she was assigned to a certain section for the first week, and to another section for the second week. Each section held three daily sessions, listening to the reports from many fields, discussing them, and then issuing findings. The discussion took place during the first four days of the week, and the final two days were used in considering the reports of their respective drafting committees, amending them where necessary. Three full days of the closing week were spent by the entire conference in four daily plenary sessions, considering, discussing, and amending the reports of all sections. The reports of all sections have been edited by an editorial committee and printed in a book of 150 pages, entitled, The World Mission of the Church.³

The evenings were used partly for addresses on certain outstanding themes of faith, partly for meetings of special groups. Some

²International Review of Missions, v. 28, 110, p. 163

³Christendom, v. 4, 2, p. 189.

of the latter were regional--delegates from certain parts of the globe banding themselves together to discuss topics especially related to their respective countries, or topical, such as discussions on Christian unity, or special problems relating to the urban or rural areas.

As can be readily seen from this, the conference worked hard, perhaps harder than it should, as many of the delegates themselves have stated. There was no time on the schedule for recreation, for meetings of various church bodies, for chats with friends from whom one had long been separated. In fact, in the minds of most of the critics of the conference, there was not sufficient time for the delegates to do the work itself which had been allotted to them. Had there been more time for plenary discussion of the findings and reports of the various sections, many delegates, who had not been in the sections which prepared particular reports, would have been able to make valuable contributions.

"The plenary sessions of the conference were so limited in time that they did not bring that wholesome and indispensable clash of ideas to enable us to discover the fundamental urges of a conference and the unifying and inspiring force that determines its energizing influence..... Tambaram, however, teaches that this technique cannot yield its due results unless we take at least three or four full weeks for such a gathering."⁴

Another thing that we might discuss in introduction is the joint worship that took place on the Sundays and the first day. The day prior to the meeting was designated as Quiet Day.

"Crowded though our program was, and eager though we all were to plunge into it, we paused for one full day, under the unerring and loving guidance of the Bishop of Darnakal, Professor Farmer, and Bishop Henry Hobson, to become attuned to the speaking of God whom his sheep always know, for a stranger they will not follow."⁵

⁴Religious Digest, v. 8, 44, p. 22.
⁵Christendom, V. 4, 2, p. 195.

The two Sundays were days on which all discussion was abandoned. On each of these Sundays Holy Communion was celebrated, on the first Sunday the rite of the Reformed and Free churches being used, and on the second, Christmas Day, the rite of the Anglican Church. To each of these services the whole body of delegates was invited, and all did attend, never bothering about the fact that they were not united in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. After these communion services, inspirational addresses were held, the speakers addressing the audience on The Inner Life of the Church and Winning the World for Christ. Each morning, before the sessions began, there was a short period of united devotion.

"The variety of devotional traditions represented by those who conducted our prayer was an enrichment to all, and it proved possible, in spite of the press of daily duty growing steadily greater as the days went by, to surround that meeting with a zone of quiet, not only of physical silence of the buildings but of withdrawness in the spirits of the worshippers."⁶

⁶International Review of Missions, v. 28, 110, p. 165.

PARTICIPANTS

The Tambaram Meeting was geographically the most widely representative Christian gathering ever held. The exact number of countries represented is still a matter of debate. But if lands such as Java and Sumatra are counted separately, and not lumped together as the Netherland Indies, and if the countries of Latin America and Africa are dealt with similarly, then it can be said that sixty-nine areas were represented at the Tambaram Meeting.

"Take Africa as an illustration: For the first time in its history all parts of this vast continent were represented at a world conference, delegates being present from Sierra Leone, Liberia, Nigeria, the Gold Coast, the Ivory Coast, French West Africa, French Equatorial Africa, the Belgian Congo, Angola (Portuguese West Africa), the area of the former German colonies of Southwest Africa, the Union of South Africa, both Bantu and European, Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, Portuguese East Africa, Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Kenya, Uganda, the Egyptian Sudan, and Egypt."⁷

This fact is made all the more remarkable since the meeting of the International Missionary Council was not held on African, but on Asiatic soil. Asia, the home continent was also well represented. Almost every country into which Protestant missionaries have gone sent delegates: Japan, Korea, Manchuria, China, Hongkong, Siam, Malaya, Burma, India, Ceylon, Arabia, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Iran, Turkestan. It was the first time in their history that the Latin North, Central, and South American countries were officially represented in a World Christian gathering. Notable delegations were sent from the Philippines, the Netherlands Indies, and the islands of the Southern Pacific. Every land on the continent of Europe which sends out Protestant missionaries, as well as all the English speaking countries of the world were ably represented. Among the nations

⁷Christendom, v. IV, 2, p. 184f.

not represented, from which in normal times delegates might have been expected, were Spain and Italy.

"It may be questioned, therefore, whether under any other auspices or for any other purpose, there has been a gathering attended by representatives of so many parts of the world."⁸

The total number of persons that attended the Tambaram Meeting was four hundred and seventy-one. Nearly all of these had been appointed by the International Missionary Council officially. These 471 persons hailed from somewhat more than a hundred different church bodies, representing nearly all of the non-Roman denominational families. The national delegations, in the strictest sense, amounted to a total of 377 delegates. It had been decided by the officers of the Council that there should be present, if possible, a greater, or at least an equal, number of delegates from the younger churches. The committee carried out the mandates of the officers successfully in having 191 of the 377 delegates come from the lands of the younger churches. As before stated, these delegates did not represent the church body in which they were laboring, but the committee or organization which had sent them to do mission work. For instance, a Baptist missionary attending the conference as a delegate did not represent the Baptist church, but that group which was supporting him in the field. Of those coming from the lands of the younger churches, ninety-four were missionaries who had been laboring in the field, and ninety-two were members of the boards which had sent them out. The remainder of the 377, 186 in number, were nationals of the sending countries.

To this number of 377 there were added special co-opted delegates who had been invited to attend the conference because of their expert

⁸Op. cit., v. IV, 2, p. 185.

knowledge in the various fields of activity which they had made a particular study. There were also fraternal delegates present, men who belonged to other ecumenical bodies, such as the bodies of Faith and Order, Life and Work, World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches, the World's Committee, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., the World Student Christian Federation, the World Sunday School Association, the World Christian Endeavor Union, and the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches.

One of the points that the leaders deplored concerning the attendance at the conference was the relatively small number of laymen present. This lack was partly attributed to the time of the year in which the conference was held. In the opinion of the leaders, it was most unfortunate that certain problems of world mission could not have been solved with the collaboration of leading layment. Another lack which the leaders felt seriously was the absence of women who have played influential parts in the missionary enterprise.

The meeting at Madras was intended to have a great practical import.

"While the Oxford and Edinburgh Conferences brought together a larger number of ecclesiastical scholars, the Tambaram Meeting had represented in its membership more knowledge and experience in the actual work of the Christian Church throughout the world than has ever before been assembled."⁹

The intellectual level of the Madras Conference was considerably lower than that of its predecessors. It was not an assembly of theologians, or dogmaticians. The younger churches were represented on an equal level with the elder churches. This was true not only as regards their respective numbers, but also as regards their initiative, leadership, and participation.

⁹Op. cit., v. IV, 2, p. 186.

"It may be well worthwhile to add, though it may seem impertinent, that the delegations from the younger churches were in every case well worthy of their place and that there was no filling up of numbers for the sake of appearance. Indeed, the main impression left on many of the Western delegates, especially on those of them who had relatively slight contact with the younger churches, was the reality of the church life, depth of conviction, and keenness in witness of these younger brethren in the Faith."¹⁰

Because the foreign mission boards of most of the Lutheran bodies in America participate in the work of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, two Lutherans were appointed from the United States to attend the Madras Conference. These were Mrs. A. O. Sardeson, of Chicago, and Abdel Ross Wentz, professor of theology at Gettysburgh Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburgh, Pennsylvania. In addition to these two, more than forty of the delegates of the Conference, or about one-tenth of the gathering of 472 delegates, were Lutherans. The United Lutheran Church in America had two other members besides the aforementioned present at the meeting. These were the Rev. P. P. Anspach, D.D., of Tsingtao, China, and the Rev. J. Roy Strock, D.D., of Guntur, India. Dr. Anspach is the president of the United Lutheran Church in China, and Dr. Strock attended the meeting as a member of the business staff of the Conference. The latter is the Principal of Andhra Christian College, and he served the conference in the capacity of secretary of finance. The Swedish bishop of Tranquebar in South India, the Rt. Rev. Johannes Sandegren, D.D., was prominent in the work of the conference, serving as chairman of one of the sections, and as leader of one of the devotions. The Rev. Dr. R. B. Manikam, secretary of the National Christian Council of India, Burma, and Ceylon, had much to do with the program and with other arrangements. Prof. Wentz, of the Gettysburgh Seminary, was assigned to

¹⁰International Review of Missions, v. 28, 110, p. 162.

the platform address on "The New Testament Conception of the Church." Other Lutherans who attended the conference came from India, China, Japan, Turkestan, Palestine, Africa, Madagascar, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Latvia. Twice during the conference, the Lutherans held group meetings of their own.¹¹

A paper on the Madras Conference would hardly be complete without short biographical sketches of the men who were its leaders. Dr. John R. Mott, as presiding officer of the Tambaram Meeting, has been president of the International Missionary Council since 1921. He has been an official of the Y.M.C.A., General Secretary of the World Student Christian Federation, and Chairman of the Institute of Social and Religious Research. Besides this, he is the author of a long series of books. Henry Pitney Van Dusen was an outstanding leader of the Madras Conference. He has been Professor of Systematic Theology in Union Theological Seminary since 1935. He was ordained to the Presbyterian ministry in 1924, is a trustee of Princeton University, and is a member of the Editorial Board of Religion in Life. He has recently become chairman of the commission to carry on ecumenical studies in the field of Life and Work in preparation for the 1941 meeting of the World Council of Churches. Dr. T. C. Chao, another outstanding Professor of the Philosophy of Religion in Yenching University, Peiping, and Dean of the School of Religion in Yenching University, is an active member of the Madras Conference. Dr. Chao is a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and is widely honored for his great services in the training of a Christian ministry in China.¹²

The Rev. Herbert H. Farmer, D.D., took a leading share of the work

¹¹Lutheran Church Quarterly, V. 12, 3, p. 243.
¹²Christendom, V. IV, 2, p. 11f.

of the section on The Faith by Which the Church Lives. He is Professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster College, Cambridge, and was a prominent figure at the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State. The Rev. Archibald C. Craig, D.D., is the chaplain to the University of Glasgow.¹³ The Rev. Hubert Cunliffe-Jones, B.D., B.Litt., was a member of the group which discussed at Madras the Nature and Function of the Church. He is Professor of the Philosophy of Religion, Systematic Theology and Christian Social Philosophy in the Yorkshire United Independent College at Bradford.¹⁴

Among the co-opted members and prominent in the Committee of the International Mission Council is Prof. K. S. Latourette, of Yale Divinity School. He is also a member of the Board of Managers of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society. One of the most distinguished missionaries at the conference was Dr. Karl Reichelt, a Norwegian scholar, and founder of a Christian monastery in China. This is a Christian and not a Catholic order. The man is a specialist in the field of Buddhism. When the Buddhist monks make the rounds of the monasteries, they come to his and are instructed in the Christian doctrine by a man who has made a thorough study of their religion.¹⁵ Also present at the Madras Meeting was Kagawa, of Japan, who addressed the assembly one evening on the topic, "Redemption Through the Blood of Jesus." Dr. Paul W. Harrison, a medical missionary in Arabia was there to report that he could count the converts from Mohammedanism upon the fingers of his hands and was still hopeful.¹⁶

It was perhaps the delegation from Africa that caused most of

¹³ International Review of Missions, V. 28, 110, p. 302.

¹⁴ Op. cit., V. 28, 110, p. 456.

¹⁵ Watchman Examiner, V. 27, 4, p. 90f.

¹⁶ Op. cit., V. 27, 3, p. 67.

the Indo-Europeans to wonder. They sat and spoke freely without any sense of embarrassment in the presence of learned scholars. One of them was a woman who wore a handkerchief about her head in humble fashion, but who spoke words of good sense out of genuine Christian experience. These delegates could not have been far removed from the primitive life of the bush, yet here they were at a world conference of the International Missionary Council.¹⁷

¹⁷Op. cit., V. 27, 4, p. 90.

PURPOSE

"We are four hundred seventy delegates gathered from seventy nations and from many nations of the earth to consider how we may make better known to the world the love of the eternal God as he has revealed himself in Jesus Christ."¹⁸

Thus did Dr. John R. Mott state the purpose of the International Missionary Council in the address, A Message To All Peoples, made at the meeting of that Council in Madras.

There were, however, in the minds of the various delegates who attended, a large and varied amount of purposes for which the meeting should be held. Many things had happened in the world since the last meeting in Jerusalem in 1928. The far East had been flung into confusion, tumult, and agony by the terrible war of aggression on the part of the Japanese, and no one could say when this war would cease, or how long it would be before reconstruction could be begun. In India a brighter note has been struck by the signs of growing confidence between the Indian ministers and the British governors. But with the Indians making rapid advances to take over the responsibility of government themselves, who will be able to say what new difficulties the new regime will cause for Christian work.

In the Near East there have been further developments in the conflict between the Islamic order and the newer ideas of nationalism. The open sore of the Arab--Jew hostilities--is still open and chafing. The outrages of the Jew in Europe makes the problem of seeking a home for the Jew still more urgent. In Africa, secularism in education is threatening the schools in the British territories. The church is

¹⁸Op. cit., V. 27, 5, p. 119.

having trouble with racial problems. The lands of Africa are fast becoming the pawns with which the European powers are playing.¹⁹

In Europe there is a universal preoccupation with war--the defences against it and the preparations for it. Dictators are terrorizing the continent. America is still in the doldrums of the depression, and the efforts of man are being almost universally turned toward relieving this situation, than toward the activities of the church.

The delegates were aware that the ancient pestilences which destroy mankind are abroad with virulence which is almost unparalleled in the history of mankind. War is casting a shadow upon most of the human race. Race hatred has been stimulated. Greed is rampant and dominates the lives of many. All these evils bear the mark of having been manufactured by man himself. We live in a chaos which man himself has made.²⁰

In the eyes of many of the delegates, it was the purpose of the Madras Conference to allay in a measure the havoc that these evils have created. Dr. A. C. Craig wrote the following:

"As we left behind us the clouds of Europe and neared the shores of India, two questions preoccupied me; would there be given at Tambaram any convincing sign that the church of Christ can prevent the collapse of civilization? Did there perhaps await us great experiences such as might irradiate the second chapter of Acts with unguessed meanings and launch us into new life with God? These were natural questions under the circumstances. What could be more natural for one coming out of political Europe in the autumn of 1938 than to look for some sign or promise of effective public righteousness? Or what could be more natural for one coming out of ecclesiastical Europe than to long for cloven tongues and a taste of Pentecost?"²¹

Dr. K. S. Latourette, one of the co-opted members of the conference, is also of the opinion that it is the business of the church to promote peace in the world. He points to the fact that the central

¹⁹International Review of Missions, V. 27, 106, p. 153f.

²⁰Watchman Examiner, V. 27, 5, p. 119.

²¹International Review of Missions, V. 28, 110, p. 185.

figure of the Christian religion is the Prince of Peace. When Christ was born, the angels proclaimed peace to earth in the heavenly anthem with which they praised the newborn Babe. In the beatitudes there is embedded praise for the peacemakers. The standard prayer of the church conditions forgiveness of God upon the forgiveness by those who use the prayer to those who have done them wrong. Can we look to the Christian Church as a means of deliverance from this world-wide doom? What is the Christian church contributing to the curbing of war and to the just solutions of disputes between nations? What can Christians do beyond that which they already are doing which might reduce the frequency of war? Are we who call ourselves Christians justified in regarding our faith as a road to peace? Many people say that Christ is the way to peace. Still more are turning to the church, awaiting hopefully for some action on the part of the church to allay present political evils. Are these people foredoomed to disillusionment or is their expectation warranted?²² Such are the questions which Dr. Latourette asks as he rethinks the objectives which should have been reached, to his thinking, at Madras.

The need to counteract spiritual evils was also among the objectives of the Meeting of the International Missionary Council at Madras. Spiritual challenges spring up both from the world and from within the church. Races who have lived in the backwoods for almost the entire span of their life are suddenly being confronted with the complexities of civilization. The West, as well as the East, is confronted with a non-Christian world. There is a wide-spread disintegration of morals and authority. The church may be confronted with the probability of fighting the battle of religious liberty

²² Op. cit., V. 28, 111, p. 347f.

over again. Within the church there is the problem of keeping the half-converted younger churches from becoming diluted with superstition and paganism. New ideas and attitudes are cutting at the roots of missionary work because they are cutting at the roots of Christianity itself.²³

Leaders who are supposed to have certain discerning powers recognize the fact that this is the end of an era, and that there lies ahead the dawn of an age which may transcend everything that we have already lived through. But they also recognize this time as a moment of grave peril. Ancient and modern paganisms are threatening the life of the spirit both in the East and in the West. Pseudo-religions have arisen creating new problems. Never before have there been more sinister challenges to the allegiance of men.²⁴

It is not surprising therefore, that the leaders of the Christian forces in the world felt that it was time for another world consultation. Revivals of pagan religions made them take a step towards fundamentalism again. They realized that the evils existing in the world have been man-made, and that there is no man who is able to save mankind. From this pessimism man is rescued by the fact that he knows that there is One who does not suffer defeat. They view God, not as a remote and careless deity, but as a kind and loving Father who is concerned about his children.

"We who have looked at God through Christ, His Messenger, His Son, torn with suffering on the cross on which only his love for man has placed him, have a tragic but transfiguring affect upon insight into the richness and reality of God's passion for his own.... It is clear that only God can save the peoples, and that God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ not only can, but will. It must become clearer to us all, however, that the instruments

²³Religious Digest, V. 8, 42, p. 60.

²⁴International Review of Missions, V. 27, 107, p. 313.

he demands are not men and women of ideals as such, but those who constantly in prayer and worship verify those ideals before his august will, ²⁵ verify and improve and never cease to re-verify them."

In order to meet the challenges that confront the church, both from within and without, it was also one of the purposes of the conference to foster cooperation and unity between churches and denominations. Younger and Older Churches should be brought into closer contact. Various denominations should strive ever to work together in closer unity. The governing purpose of the Madras Meeting was to arrive, if possible, at a common mind, to see where the leaders of the various organizations were ready and willing to proceed together. Throughout the conference there could be constantly heard voices pleading for unity. Especially the younger churches came out with an appeal for organic union--but they did not state exactly what they meant by the term. It seems that most of the delegates were expecting unity to flow out of fellowship, and from this unity of fellowship, they expected some kind of organizational expression.

A broad statement of the purposes of the Madras Meeting may be taken from the Message to All Peoples from the Madras Conference, which closes with this paragraph:

"We call upon our fellow Christians throughout the world to join us in a new dedication. Surely God is summoning us in these times to let go our self-sufficiency, to frequent his altars, to learn of him, and to make known his ways in all the relationships of life. To make him known in the state involves labor for the establishment of justice among all the people. In the world of commerce it involves the ending of competition for private gain and the beginning of emulation for the public good. Everywhere it involves self-sacrificial service. God grant to his church to take the story of his love to all mankind, until that love surround the earth, binding the nations, the races, the classes into a community of sympathy for one another undergirded by a deathless faith in Christ."²⁶

²⁵ Watchman Examiner, V. 27, 5, p. 120.

²⁶ Op. cit., V. 27, 5, p. 120.

The stated purposes for the Madras Meeting were far from what would have been expected as the objectives of a conference designed to further the cause of Christians missions. In the first place, the thing which they are most concerned about is the condition of the political world. What can be done to avert war? What can be done to promote peace? What can be done to raise the social level of the people? Will the Christian religion, or the Christian church be able to do anything about these evils?

One cannot help but think of the weak faith of the disciples at the time of Christ, of the secular hopes of the Jews concerning the Messiah. The disciples were concerned about who would have the position of honor in the kingdom of Christ. The Jews hoped that the Messiah would establish an earthly kingdom, would restore the nation of the Jews to the supremacy which they once had in the world. Christ continually had to tell those people differently. He told the mother of the sons of Zebedee that they could have the honor that they desired if they were able to drink the cup that he drank. He told Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world. Therefore, the church, His Church, should also not be of this world. The Church has but one purpose, and that is to save souls, to make disciples of all nations. Of course, the church can indirectly promote the cause of peace, and raise the morals of people by first indoctrinating them in the Christian religion, causing them to lead upright lives. But as long as sin is in this world, there will also be political and moral evil. And the only way open to the church to attack these evils is through the Christianization of the individual.

A criticism of the purpose to attain unity in the church will be given when the section on Cooperation and Unity is discussed. Suffice

it to say here that the union that they tried to effect at Madras was merely outward, external. That is not the way to solve the problem of unity. Before there can be any semblance of outward unity, there must be harmony of doctrine.

By far the most important preparatory work for the Madras Conference, however, is the book written by Dr. Hendrik Kraemer, A Christian Message in a Non-Christian World. In the general plan of the conference, this work has the place under the second theme, The Mission of the Church. What the committee expected from it was that it should "state the fundamental position of the Christian Church as a witness-bearing body in the modern world, relating this to different conflicting views of the attitude to be taken by Christians towards other faiths, and dealing in detail with the evangelistic approach to the great non-Christian faiths."²⁷

This book was circulated among all the delegates of the conference in advance, so as to be digested and thoroughly studied so that it might form a background for the meeting and a basis upon which the discussion might center.

²⁷ (Minutes of the 21st Executive Committee of the International Missionary Council, Old Jerusalem, 1936.)

PREPARATION

As before stated, the Madras Meeting had been planned for three years before the Conference actually took place. Their plans called for a general survey of the entire field of mission work as it was being carried on in the world today. As a result, two statistical reports were made, both being edited by Dr. J. I. Parker. The names of these two works are: A Directory of World Missions, and An Interpretive Statistical Survey. These two books give, insofar as this was possible in the limited time in which they were written, a detailed account of where missions are being carried on, what bodies are carrying on this work, and what numerical extent they have so far attained.

By far the most important preparatory work for the Madras Conference, however, is the book written by Dr. Hendrik Kraemer, A Christian Message in a Non-Christian World. In the general plan of the conference, this work has its place under the second theme, The Witness of the Church. What the committee expected from it was that it should "state the fundamental position of the Christian Church as a witness-bearing body in the modern world, relating this to different conflicting views of the attitude to be taken by Christians towards other faiths, and dealing in detail with the evangelistic approach to the great non-Christian faiths."²⁷

This book was circulated among all the delegates of the Conference in advance, to be digested and thoroughly studied that it might form a background for the meeting and a basis upon which the discussion might center.

²⁷(Minutes of the Ad Interim Committee of the International Missionary Council, Old Jordans, 1936.)

The first section of the book is devoted to a discussion of the world such as it is today--a world in transition. Dr. Kraemer divides the world into the West and the East. He sees the West wallowing about in relativism, in pseudo-absolutes.

"The outstanding characteristic of our time is the complete disappearance of all absolutes, and the victorious but dreadful dominion of the spirit and attitude of relativism. This is not contradicted by the stupendous fact that mankind is literally wallowing in pseudo-absolutes; rather the reverse is the case. Religion, morality, systems of life, standards, spiritual values, normative principles, social orders are all divested of any absolute character or significance..... Only a small portion of modern men who have looked into the abyss of consistent relativism awoken to the fact that the place to which they are destined to look is heaven, and that heaven is not closed."²⁸

The secularism of the world of the West, the spiritual and social revolutions that are taking place, all these factors point to the truth that "the Christian Church, religiously speaking, in the West as well as in the East, is standing in a pagan, non-Christian world, and has again to consider the whole world its mission field, not in the rhetorical but in the literal sense of the word."²⁹

The crisis which is taking place in the East is the direct result of the penetration of the West into the East. This penetration has caused a destruction of the old manners and customs, of the old way of life, and it has started on the other hand a reconstruction of their civilization. It cannot be denied that the meeting of the religions of the East with the thought systems of the West will have a great effect on the missionary work that is being carried on in the East.

"Summing up, we may be justified in concluding that the Christian Church in the West and in the East, despite the difference in background and history, is virtually

²⁸ A Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, Dr. H. Kraemer, p. 6f.
²⁹ Ibid., p. 17.

confronted with the same fundamental problem: the relation to the world and all its spheres of life, and the same danger lest it solve it the wrong way. For the different concrete conditions there will certainly be one solution. But one demand universally emerges from the situation everywhere, that is, back to the recapturing of the vision of what God in Christ meant the Christian community to be--a fellowship of believers, rooted in God and his redemptive order, and, therefore committed to the service and salvation of the world; going to the bottom in its criticism of and opposition to the evil of the world, but at the same time going to the bottom in its identification with the sufferings and needs of the world."³⁰

Just what is the fundamental problem of the Church in the world, both in the East and in the West? Let us answer this question from the standpoint of a Christian believer. When Christ commissioned his disciples he said: "Go ye therefore, and teach (make disciples of) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."³¹ That then is the fundamental problem of the Church--how may she best make disciples of all nations? How may she best teach all nations to observe all things whatsoever the Lord has commanded? Certainly she cannot do it by delving into all the social and economic and political problems that confront the people of this world. For these there may be, as Dr. Kraemer says, "no one solution." But for the fundamental problem of the church, which we have stated above, there is one, and only one, solution, and that is the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in its truth and purity--preaching it to souls who are lost in sin and who are consciously or unconsciously hungering for that truth and purity, that their souls might be comforted, that they might find the one absolute in this world of pseudo-absolutes.

³⁰Ibid., p. 30.

³¹Matthew 28, 19.20.

But let us return to Dr. Kraemer's statement concerning what "Christ meant the Christian community to be; a fellowship of believers, rooted in God and His divine redemptive order, and, therefore, committed to the service and salvation of the world." Christ did mean his church to be a fellowship of believers. Christ did mean the Church to be "rooted in God and His divine redemptive order." Christ did want his church to be "committed to the service and salvation of the world." These statements of Kraemer sound fundamental enough when viewed separately. But when one reads the book in its context, it will be found that Kraemer means by the words "fellowship of believers" an organization that is working for social harmony; that by the "divine redemptive order" the vicarious atonement is not meant; that by the words "service and salvation of the world" he means social betterment, and not salvation of souls.

Dr. Kraemer continues his book with a section on Whither Missions? During the eighteenth century there was a general awakening of the missionary spirit in the Church. This amovement began its course in simple faith and burning love. Not only was this missionary movement "ignorant about this world in which it acted; it even approached it with a host of misconceptions and wrong notions."³² At that, it had high hopes and met with measurable success. At the present time the Church has become a world-wide community, a universal Church, and as such, it was confronted with the problem that goes with a world-wide organization. For this purpose, world-wide conferences were held, the first being at Edinburgh in 1910, where the church centered its attentions on a review of the mission fields throughout the world. At the Jerusalem meeting in 1928, the Church devoted itself to a more united effort toward Christian service.

³²A Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, Dr. H. Kraemer, p. 35.

Since that time it has been evident that the humanistic trend is not the one to follow. To meet the challenges in the West, and to Christianize the people of the East, who are steeped in nationalism, it is necessary to return to fundamentals.

"This seems to be the same conclusion which crops up from the consideration of the situation of the Church in the storm of modern life. Back to fundamentals! Surveying the missionary problem at the home base and in the field all indications point in one direction: the call to consecrate ourselves anew to the great missionary task by fundamental re-thinking of missionary principles and methods, enlightened by past failures and successes, drawing support from what deepened knowledge through modern research can teach us, but above all, re-discovering the true missionary motive and purpose."³³

To tell people that Christianity will bring them enlightenment, freedom from political domination, that it will make them powerful nations, that it is an infallible guide to progress, will no longer do. Christianity is no longer to be identified with the progressive West. We should not promise people that Christianity will dispel economic misery and social disturbance, because those things are controlled by something that is entirely outside of the sphere of the church.

"As Kagawa has said, the starting point of missions is the divine commission to proclaim the Lordship of Christ over all life; and, therefore, a return to the pristine enthusiasm for evangelism and a new vision of what this implies in word and deed in the present complicated world are needed."³⁴

Would that they would only return to fundamentalism in earnest! Would that they would preach Christ and him crucified to starving souls! Would that they would return to the Bible and use it as the only source and norm for their doctrine! Such action would solve most of all the missionary problems that now confront them.

³³

³³ Ibid., p. 59.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 60.

If all would accept these principles, then they could work together in the unity which the Conference at Madras was trying to attain, and mission work would go on till the end of time with marvellous results.

The following chapters of the book, dealing with the Christian Faith, the Non-Christian Religions, their systems of life and thought, the present religious situations in the non-Christian world, the Missionary Approach to them, and the Christian Mission in relation to its environment will be discussed under the various heads in which they came up before the conference. It may be well, however, at this point to define what Kraemer means by what he calls Biblical Realism. In line with his call to return to fundamentalism, Dr. Kraemer also makes an appeal to return to the Bible.

"The only legitimate source from which to take our knowledge of the Christian faith in its real substance is the Bible. Therefore, to the Bible will we turn, because there is the witness of the prophets and apostles to be found on which the Church is built."³⁵

Biblical realism to Dr. Kraemer is then that the Bible asserts realities. It challenges man to confront himself with these realities in his total being and to make his decisions accordingly.

We do not like Dr. Kraemer's attitude toward the Bible. Listen to some of his statements:

"The Bible offers no religious or moral philosophy, not even a theistic or a Christocentric one.... It could not be better expressed that the essential message and content of the Bible is always the living, eternally-active God, the indubitable Reality, from whom, by whom, and to whom all things are.... The Bible in its direct, intense realism presents no theology. It presents the witness of prophets and apostles.... Even the apostle Paul, surely the profoundest and greatest theologian the world has ever seen, cannot be characterized as the creator of a theology."³⁶

³⁵ Ibid., p. 61f.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 64f.

That the Bible is not a textbook of philosophy is certain, but it does teach a philosophy of life, a Christian philosophy of life. It teaches man how to live in this life that he may also live in the life to come. This Christian philosophy of life is Christo-centric, just as the whole Bible is Christo-centric. Modernists today would make of the Bible a theocentric book, speaking always of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. The statement that the Bible presents no theology is entirely false. Certainly such passages as John 3, 16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," contain theology. When he says that the Bible is the witness of the apostles and prophets, we begin to wonder what the man understands by inspiration. And, finally, what would be the sense in calling Paul a theologian if he presented no theology in his writings. Such thoughts run through a person's mind as he reads the statements which Dr. Kraemer makes concerning the Bible.

Concerning the book in general, however, no one who is dealing with missions can well afford to miss this book. It has thorough, complete, and up-to-date information on the great non-Christian religions of the world. And much of the advice given the missionary is good. But we must remember that Kraemer is a Calvinist, and, therefore, his concept of theology is not Christo-centric, as ours is, but theo-centric. Kraemer is not an extreme liberalist, but he also refuses to be fundamentalistic.³⁷ After chiding the liberalists, he makes the following statement:

"The guilt of the fundamentalists is not less great. In their zeal for the truth of Christianity they identify their peculiar doctrine and intellectualist expression of Christianity

³⁷Concordia Theological Monthly, V. 10, 12, p. 954.

with the Christian revelation as contained in Biblical realism. This laudable zeal for Biblical truth does not exculpate them, however, from the great wrong of preventing many Chinese Christians and non-Chinese from getting a right apprehension of the dynamic and supra-doctrinal character of the prophetic religion of Biblical realism."³⁸

The worst characteristic of the book is that it presents the doctrine of the atonement in the vaguest terms. To Dr. Kraemer Christ is a holy and loving Traveller come to redeem and restore the world. His incarnation was accomplished for the purpose of showing that God wants contact with man.³⁹ It is certainly a pity that the book which served as a foundation at a world-wide Christian Conference of missions did not have a clear ^{presentation} perspicuity of the main doctrine of the Christian Church--the doctrine of the vicarious atonement. Such teaching will serve only to bewilder to a greater degree the people who will be reached and influenced by it.

³⁸A Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, Dr. H. Kraemer, p.383.
³⁹Concordia Theological Monthly, V. 10, 12, p. 954.

PROCEEDINGS

It may be well to begin this study of the proceedings of the International Missionary Conference held at Madras by giving first a general outline of the sixteen sections, naming the topics which each section discussed and upon which it issued findings. In the following we have a general outline of the themes which were studied and discussed at Madras:

- I. The Faith by Which the Church Lives
 1. The Faith and the present world situation, taking into consideration also the non-Christian religions.
 2. The Church: its nature and function.
- II. The Witness of the Church
 1. The unfinished evangelistic task.
 2. The place of the church in evangelism.
 3. The witness of the church in relation to the non-Christian religions, the new paganisms, and the cultural heritage of nations.
 4. The witness of the church: practical questions of method and policy.
- III. The Life of the Church
 1. Worship, the Christian home, and religious education.
 2. The indigenous ministry of the church, both ordained and lay.
 3. Christian educational, medical, and social work.
 4. The place, work, and training of the missionary.
 5. An adequate program for Christian literature.
- IV. The Church and Its Environment
 1. The economic factor in the church.
 2. The church and the changing social and economic order.
 3. The church and the international order.
 4. The church and state.
- V. Cooperation and Unity

It shall be the aim of this paper to present the chief problems which were discussed under each of these heads and to give a criticism of them from the standpoint of a Christian believer.

Since the Jerusalem Meeting held in 1928 was much concerned about the secularism that was rampant in the world at that time, it was thought

wise by the leaders of the International Missionary Council to make the first section which would be discussed at the Conference at Madras a discussion of the Faith by Which the Church Lives. In this statement, however, it was not their purpose to have the section cover the whole field of faith. Rather, it was their purpose to say "as befits a body of people dedicated to the cause of the evangelization of the world, those things in the Gospel that are of supreme relevance and meaning for that task and for the Church set in the kind of world in which we live."⁴⁰ The things that were deemed necessary to say, then, were these, that salvation is the utter need of mankind, that the Gospel of the Cross is glorious and majestic, and what the meaning of forgiveness and redemption is. At one point in the discussions, four men were sent out to draft individually a statement of what they thought was most important in this connection. Upon their return, they found that each had said practically the same thing.

In considering this section it is to be noted that Madras was not a conference of theologians. The main purpose of the Council was to develop practical programs and policies, and, therefore, they originated no new thought (if that were possible). It was primarily a council of the responsible leaders of the world mission organizations. We must remember then, in our criticism, that these men are approaching the Faith from the practical angle, instead of from the theological. This however, will not excuse any false notions of doctrine which they might propound.

In general, we would say, that although there are rays of fundamentalism in the report of this section, the main emphasis is on

⁴⁰International Review of Missions, V. 28, 110, p. 186.

the external and practical side. There is a reason for this. These people, as all other people, are living in a world of evil. There is a great danger for Christians, because they are living in the world, to become of the world. The "becoming of the world" in the case of these people, is not to be understood in any gross sense as it is in the case of rank unbelievers and infidels. But still, they have become "of the world." They think more of this world and the situations in this world than they do of the other world which is to come. Dr. H. H. Farmer, in his Article on The Faith By Which the Church Lives gives evidence of this:

"One reason for this explicit emergence (of social questions), we may surmise, was, as already indicated, the deeper realization that has come during the last decade of the sinister power, the deep inrootedness, the infinite disguises, the inexhaustible versatility of evil in human affairs, enabling it to wrest every apparent progress to its own end. 'The beast in man has broken forth in unbelievable brutality and tyranny,' says the report of section I. No one today, certainly no one at the Meeting, was disposed to speak with facile optimism about progress, or about 'bringing in the Kingdom;' no one who does not realize that the Christian confidence in God's victory, if it is to endure and give unassailable peace and power, must have a basis other than anything that can be empirically observed in the historical process itself. It must rest on the transcendent and look to the transcendent in some sort of eschatological hope."⁴¹

That the statement of The Faith by Which the Church Lives was formulated with a direct viewpoint towards the present world situation is a fact of which the leaders themselves are aware.

"That the statement of 'The Faith by Which the Church Lives' was fashioned.... under a profound and continuous sense of the tragic situation in which mankind finds itself today, is evidenced not only by the explicit statements of the opening sentences, but also by every paragraph within it. It is unmistakably a document which has been hammered out 'in the presence of disasters and forebodings'--to use its own phrase."⁴²

⁴¹Op. cit., V. 28, 110, p. 182.

⁴²Op. cit., V. 28, 110, p. 174.

Just what is this statement, then, that has been formulated in view of the present situation of the world? Upon examination, we shall find that it presents the doctrines to which it gives voice in fundamental terms, but that the meaning which is placed upon these terms is not fundamental, but liberal. During the conference, an address was delivered by Toyohiko Kagawa, of Japan, entitled, The Meaning of the Cross. Certainly the statements which he made in this address belong under the general heading, The Faith by Which the Church Lives. Here is his opening paragraph:

"On Calvary I see the blood of Jesus dropping down from his body on the Cross! I hear the sound of the agony of the Lamb of God for the sins of mankind! It was for me and for my nation and for my race and for the whole world! I have committed sins and Jesus died for my sake! My race has committed sins and He died for my race. And the whole of mankind had fallen into sin, so He died for us all."⁴³

These words certainly sound fundamental. But the meaning that is placed into them is not so fundamental. In the same address he later speaks of the "consciousness of redeeming love" which Jesus had, of the "inner consciousness" which was too deep for his disciples to understand. To Kagawa the destiny of Christ was virtually the same as the destiny of the prophet Jonah, who was a type of Christ. Later, he gives seven phases of redemption:

1. It was for the restoration to life of those dead in sin.
2. It was suffering for the weak to give aid to enfeebled strength.
3. It was the required price paid for it.
4. It meant the ransom or a grain of wheat dying for the coming harvest.
5. It meant the burnt offering of the Lamb of God, obedient and meek, faithfulness in the sight of God.
6. It was the forgiveness of sins by the declaration of justification through Christ.
7. And it was the atonement of God reconciled to mankind through the mediation of Jesus Christ.

⁴³ Religious Digest, V. 8, 42, p. 63.

This definition of the redemption is entirely too weak. There is no positive statement of the vicarious atonement in it. The best that it can do is to state that the redemption is "the forgiveness of sins by the declaration of justification through Christ." But this is ambiguous. It could be understood as referring to the vicarious atonement. It could just as well be understood in the light of the interpretations of those liberals to whom Christ is nothing more than a pattern of life, and to whom it makes no difference whether Christ actually existed or not, as long as the principles of Christ exist.

Abdel Ross Wentz, a professor at the Lutheran Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, member of the United Lutheran Church, in writing a summary of the Madras Conference with especial regard to Lutheran interests, praises the fact that, as he saw it, Christ was placed in the center of the conference. He quotes part of the findings of the section that discussed the Faith by Which the Church Lives:

"Who then shall save? God saves, through Jesus Christ our Lord. 'God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.' This is the heart of the Christian Gospel, the Gospel which we proclaim."⁴⁴

Certainly this is a fundamental statement. Any orthodox Christian could sign that statement without qualms of conscience. That statement also puts Christ in the center of Christianity, where he belongs. Again, however, the fundamental statement becomes liberalistic by the meaning that is read into the words. Listen to the next statements:

"God in His infinite love has acted for men's salvation. He has come among them in Jesus of Nazareth, His Word made flesh. In him he has conquered the power of sin and death.

⁴⁴Lutheran Church Quarterly, V. XII, 3, p. 254.

Jesus Christ, in His teachings and life of perfect love recalls men to that which God would have them be, and brings them to shame for their betrayal of His expectation. Through His faith and perfect obedience they come to trust the only true God. His suffering and death on Calvary brings them to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin and assures them of God's pardon. His resurrection is the victory of love and holiness over death and corruption. Through His arisen and living Presence, men who dedicate their wills to Him become with Him partakers of eternal life. In the strength and joy of forgiveness, daily renewed at the foot of the Cross, they are made more than conquerors over every evil."⁴⁵

This interpretation of the preceding paragraph nullifies any fundamentalism which was contained in it. If the life of perfect obedience of Christ only recalls men to what God would have them be, then there is no vicariousness in His perfect life whatsoever. Then the law has not been fully and perfectly kept for us. If the suffering and death of Christ serves only to make man see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, then sin has not been taken away by the death of Christ. According to the statements of this paragraph the only thing necessary for man to do in order to become a partaker of eternal life is to dedicate our wills to Christ. One begins to wonder what they do with such passages as "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.... but He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed;" Is. 53, 4.5. Or, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin;" I Jn. 1, 7. Or, "Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." I Pet. 1, 18.

⁴⁵ Op. cit., V. XII, 3, p. 224f.

It is evident, that in order to get around passages like these, they have to interpret the Bible according to the dictates of their own reason. They do, however, strongly urge a return to the Bible.

"If the Church is to repossess this its faith in all its uniqueness and adequacy and power, one indispensable thing demanding special emphasis today is the continuous nourishing of its life upon the Bible. We are bold therefore to summon all Christians to a deeper and more consistent study of the Bible, instructor and sustainer of the Christian faith through the ages."⁴⁶

Here the return to the Bible is cited as the one thing indispensable for the church, especially the church which is undertaking mission work. The leaders were aware of the fact that Christians everywhere have a determination to lay hold upon deeper foundations of faith. In order to fulfill this determination, it is necessary to return to the faith of the Reformation which can only be made through a recovery of the faith of the Bible. They are also aware of the fact that they must have something firm and foundational to offer the new converts which they will make on the mission field. "For missions, the Bible is both a practical and a strategic necessity, the one sine qua non."⁴⁷ The Bible is the only book which can introduce the convert to the essence of the Christian faith. The Bible is the only book which can nurture the new life brought about in the convert, and alone can help him gain a foothold against non-Christian or anti-Christian influences.

Heartening it would indeed be, if this return to the Bible were in no way whatsoever qualified. But, sad to say, it has been qualified. Oh, they are returning to the Bible all right, but to the Bible as they themselves would interpret it. Nathaniel Micklem,

⁴⁶Christendom, V. IV, 2, p. 211.

⁴⁷Op. cit., p. 211.

Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, in his article on The Faith of the Church states that "all our Protestant churches rest upon the Word of God in Holy Scripture as the standard and rule of faith."⁴⁸

But in the very next paragraph he states the following:

"How are we to decide between the various interpretations of Scripture offered us by the scholars? Does not Scripture contain much that is transitory, ambiguous, untrue? What is the use in these days of literary criticism to speak of the Bible as if it contained one simple, single message? We know these criticisms. They come from without the church/ they mean very little to believers. We have plenty of theological problems; there is plenty of room for differences of accent and opinion, but 'we know that the Son of God is come,' we know that in Christ God Himself has come for our salvation, that 'He hath visited and hath redeemed His people, 'that we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of our sins.'

And to that last statement he adds a footnote:

I find that it is necessary to insert a footnote to explain that 'the blood of Christ' is not a catchword from the theology of St. Anselm, but a New Testament expression meaning: 'the life of the Crucified' or 'the living One who was crucified.'⁴⁹

This footnote takes all the color out of the statement which it modifies and leaves it pale and anemic. The Church will not live to a very old age if this is to be the faith by which the Church lives. The redemption by Jesus Christ is thereby robbed of all its comfort. The Christian religion is thereby turned from a religion of grace to a religion of works, a natural religion. The leaders worry about the secularization of the church. They are deeply concerned about the present condition of world affairs. But the fact that they are mutilating the Holy Word of God means nothing at all to them. It is their stated purpose to return to the Bible, to put Christ into the center of their religion, to become more fundamental, but they arbitrarily use the Word of God as the dictates of their reason command.

⁴⁸International Review of Missions, V. 27, 107, p. 330.

⁴⁹Op. cit., V. 27, 110, p. 331.

Georgia Harkness, Professor of the History and Literature of Religion at Mount Holyoke College, a member of the section which discussed "The Faith by Which the Church Lives," enumerates the things that ought to be present in ecumenical theology in an article entitled: The Theological Basis of the Missionary Message. The first thing that she mentions is that an ecumenical theology ought to be Christ-centered. But what she means by Christ-centered is that a person must have a "personal confrontation" of Christ. The second point is that an ecumenical theology must believe that Christ is the Incarnation of God. But by the Incarnation of God she means that "Jesus is Lord because in His life and word, His death and resurrection, we see the living God at work in the world for our redemption." The second point is modified by the third, that an ecumenical theology must have room for both the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith. By deduction, she arrives at the fact that the historical Jesus was adequate to become the Christ of faith. There is no deity of Christ to be found in that statement. In the next place, an ecumenical theology must bear witness to the Kingdom. The Kingdom, according to Miss Harkness, may be entered by participating in suffering love for the establishment of God's righteous rule among men. Fifthly, the church must be regarded as the primary instrument for advancing the Kingdom. In other words, the Church and the Kingdom are not identical, as the Bible teaches them to be, as in the passage, "The good seed are the children of the kingdom," the good seed being the Christians, members of the Church (Matt. 13, 38). And finally, an ecumenical faith must look to the Bible for its basic faith, the Bible, of course, being a book from which doctrine cannot be dogmatically, or literalistically drawn, but vitally conceived.⁵⁰

⁵⁰Op. cit., V. 28, 112, pp. 521-525.

The second section under the main heading of The Faith by Which the Church Lives, was a discussion of The Church: Its Nature and Function. Abdel Ross Wentz, a Lutheran professor of the United Lutheran Church, delivered an address before the convention on The New Testament Conception of the Church. Because of the fact that the author of this essay is a Lutheran, we would expect to find a fairly fundamental article, and to all intent and purpose, that is what it is. The essay is divided into five sections, that the Church is Christian, holy apostolic, catholic, and one. We would have liked to have seen a statement concerning the essence of the Church, that the Church is the communion of the saints of all ages, but that definition was lacking. In several places, Dr. Wentz is not as clear as he might have been. In the section that deals with the Church as being Christian, he says concerning the beginning of the church that it began as "simple personal trust in a Person, unquestioning devotion to a beloved personality, who, they felt, had saved them from abysmal disaster and who, they believed, could lead them into abiding safety."⁵¹

We fear that at times the conception of the invisible Church is mixed with that of the visible Church. Prof. Wentz cites the parable of the tares as descriptive of the Church. This true of the visible, but not of the invisible church. Likewise the parable of the dragnet which brought up all sorts of fish. The Church--the invisible Church--itself is holy since it is the communion of believers and of believers only. Believers have the true holiness and the righteousness which Christ has gained for them on Calvary.

Again we find that Prof. Wentz confuses the invisible with the visible church under the section on unity. Here he states that the

⁵¹Religious Digest, V. 8, 42, p. 66.

Church is one. The unity of the Church is not something to be sought after, it already exists. This is true concerning the invisible church. Christians, no matter what church body they belong to, as long as they are believers, are one. But when he states that the New Testament represents the unity of the Church as a process, a growth, an imperfect present reality, then he must be speaking of the visible church, for the invisible church is perfect in every respect, and does not have to proceed nor grow towards unity. We wish that Prof. Wentz would have stated the sources from which he gathered his tenets out of the New Testament so that we could have examined his teachings in the clearer light of Scripture.

So much for what the conference had to say on the nature of the Church. There remains yet to be described briefly the functions of the Church. The section made the following statement of the functions:

"While the Church has no universally valid political or economic programme.... it should serve as a waking and active conscience to emphasize Christian principles in social life... All the Church's activities, whether social service, education, the spreading of Christian literature, the healing of the body and mind, or any other work undertaken for man, follow from the essential task committed to it."⁵²

Here again we notice secular functions coming to the foreground. Why is it that the things which are of a secondary nature in church work must always be mentioned first? It is the business of the Church, first and foremost, to save souls. After a person has become a Christian, he will live a moral life. In this way, and in this secondary way only can the Christian Church work toward the betterment of social evils. To go at them from the outside is the wrong procedure. That is the business of the state. But to work at it by first changing the

⁵²The World Mission of the Church, p. 32.

individual, by getting at those evils from the inside, that is the business of the Church, and she must continue to change people from their natural state to a state of regeneration.

So much then for The Faith by Which the Church Lives. Since it was the purpose of the Madras Meeting to work out practical matters, they devoted only one section to a statement concerning the Faith. The rest of the sections deal with external phases of church work and life. We shall proceed now with a discussion of The Witness of the Church.

The first section to be dealt with here is the Unfinished Evangelistic Task of the Church. Since the time that the Church was begun, it has been a missionary Church. Christ commissioned His disciples to go out and evangelize the world. And this command has been given not only to the disciples, but also to the Church at large. The Church must recognize the call to world-wide evangelism. The fact that evil is rampant in the world today, that Satan is trying as hard as ever to hinder the Kingdom of God is no reason for the Church to step back from its missionary position. It ought rather to be an incentive to spur the Church on to a greater activity.

This fact the leaders of the Madras Meeting recognized. The section which dealt with the Unfinished Evangelistic Task called attention to the following startling facts:

1. There are regions where doors are closing to the Gospel, and where many of the non-Christian peoples have become less open-minded to Christian influences. Reference is made to revivals within Buddhism, Hinduism, Islamism and Shintoism.
2. There is more organized opposition to the Christian Church than at any time within the past hundred years. There is a real danger that if the work of the Church is not intensified the adverse movement will become so strong as seriously to threaten the whole work of the Church in the world.

3. Nations are seeking substitutes for God. Pseudo-absolutes, like the nation, are replacing old religious loyalties.
4. There are more non-Christians in the world now than there were ten years ago. The growth of the Christian Church has not yet overtaken the growth of population.
5. The resources in missionaries and funds from the sending countries are relatively considerably less than they were a generation ago, and in consequence there has been a curtailment of the evangelistic effort.⁵³

Here we have a group of facts which have been formulated by missionaries who have been on the field and ought to know what they are talking about. The facts in themselves are startling. They are facts that any church body which makes missions one of the important points on its program may well take cognizance of and use to good advantage. They are facts which ought to spur all Christians on to greater activity in missionary effort.

After it had been shown that there was greater need for evangelists in the world, the Conference set about to discuss the Place of the Church in Evangelism. We quote a portion of the findings of the section that worked on that topic:

"The Church's evangelism is the expression of its loving devotion to Christ, and of the insight given to it by the Holy Spirit that Christ is the answer to the needs of men. Through the whole of its life and activities it is the essential characteristic of the Church that it reveals its knowledge of the redemptive love of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ....

"The Church's message to the world is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in all His manifold grace and power. It is the work of evangelism both to set forth the facts of His life upon earth and His teaching about God and man, and also to exalt and proclaim Him, crucified, risen, and glorified, that men may awaken to God and to a sense of their sin and separation from God, may be led to true repentance and to that act of will whereby they believe in and receive the forgiveness of their sins through Christ, and enter upon a new life of trust and obedience toward God and of abounding hope for this world and that which is to come."⁵⁴

⁵³Watchman Examiner, V. 27, 5, p. 119.

⁵⁴Lutheran Church Quarterly, V. 12, 3, p. 255.

The Church has been entrusted with the Gospel of Christ. Taking the above mentioned statements to be meant in their literal sense, and not stained with any rationalistic interpretation, it is the business of the Church to proclaim those facts to the world. Christ must be preached to the world. People must be brought to repentance, to faith in Christ who has given His life for them. That this is the business of the Church and not of any other body is seen from the fact that the great missionary command was given to the Church. "Go ye therefore....." This command was not given to the disciples only, but to the whole assembly that had gathered just before the Savior rose into heaven. To leave the matter of missions to the discretion of a certain volunteer group, or to an independent board of missions will not do. The Church should take the initiative in all missionary endeavor which requires united action.

The next question to be settled under the general theme of the Witness of the Church was what the attitude of the Church ought to be towards the already existing loyalties of its prospective members. Therefore, a section was commissioned to deal with The Witness of the Church in Relation to the Non-Christian Religions, The New Paganisms, and The Cultural Heritage of Nations.

The problem of the non-Christian religions was raised by Kraemer in his Christian Message in a Non-Christian World. In Chapter IV he treated the attitude which should be taken toward the non-Christian religions, and in Chapters V and VI he treated the systems of life and thought in these non-Christian religions, analyzing each of them separately. In these pages Dr. Kraemer presents the view that the Christian faith, which is grounded in revelation, is to be sharply

distinguished from all other religions except Judaism and Islamism (which will be treated later); that there is no evidence of revelation whatsoever present in the non-Christian religions; that Christianity can in no wise be complemented by them; and that it is dangerous to try to make points of contact between Christianity and non-Christian religions.

Regarding these statements there was quite a bit of dissection among the delegates of the Madras Meeting. Some of the members felt that the non-Christian religions also rested on revelation; that there is something good in the non-Christian religions; and that missionaries should build upon these good elements, and from them develop a religion which would be satisfactory to an individual who felt that he ought not give up old loyalties.

The Jerusalem Conference had suggested a sort of sharing process between Christianity and the non-Christian religions. They looked upon the non-Christian religions as complete systems of life and thought which to a certain degree at least manifested the revelation of God. Kraemer held the opposite view. The Conference of Madras, since it was divided in its opinion, partly holding with Kraemer and partly with the Jerusalem Conference, took something from both of these positions. However, it did take more from Kraemer's view than from the view of the Jerusalem Conference. Here, it may be added in a parenthetical remark, is a good example of the fact that there is no true unity among the members of the conference, but that they must compromise in order to arrive at a common ground.

Those who held that the non-Christian religions are altogether rationalistic and naturalistic look at the commendable points of the

non-Christian religions as the outcome of man's own activity, his pathetic efforts to effect his own redemption. These people have defined revelation, about which the whole argument hinges, in terms of the coming of Christ. In Christ God has revealed himself to man, and they use the term "revelation" only in this unique manner.

It is disappointing to see a Christian gathering wasting time and breath in arguments so inconsequential as these. There are only two kinds of religions--the religion of works and the religion of faith. All religions can be classified under these two heads. Which one of these is revealed should not be the question, for it cannot be denied that all religions have their starting point in revelation. We are speaking here of revelation in the wider sense, that of any manner in which God may make himself known unto men. God reveals himself to man in many ways. He reveals himself first of all in nature. The whole scheme of nature is crying out the fact that there is a God who has created it. Man, seeing the things of nature, recognizes the fact that there is a God. But the revelation of nature is not clear enough to designate the personality of this God. Therefore, men manufacture a god for themselves. It may be the sun, the moon, an animal, fire, or an idol which man himself has made.

From this it can be concluded that his religion is a mixture of revelation--that there is a God--and rationalism. So it is with all non-Christian religions. But Dr. Kraemer singles out the Jewish and the Mohammedan religions and places them in a class with Christianity as revealed religions. The difference between Judaism and Islamism and non-Christian religions is merely a matter of the degree of revelation which they received. The Jews had the true doctrine revealed

to them in its truth and purity, and from them the Mohammedans received that revelation they possess. But these religions, as they are today, are really non-Christian religions, because they are religions of works. The true revelation which they received was corrupted by rationalism and, therefore, they are what they are today--non-Christian religions.

The other problem to be settled is this--how much should the non-Christian religions be built upon in establishing Christianity? With these words did the delegates of this section answer this question:

"The end and aim of our evangelistic work is not achieved until all men everywhere are brought to a knowledge of God in Jesus Christ and to a saving faith in Him. Therefore, in this changing world we must affirm the message which is our witness to His grace. Our message is that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.

"There are many non-Christian religions that claim the allegiance of multitudes. We see and readily recognize that in them are to be found values of deep religious experience, and great moral achievements. Yet we are bold enough to call men out from them to the feet of Christ. We do so because we believe that in Him alone is the full salvation which man needs. Mankind has seen nothing to be compared to the redeeming love of God in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. What He is for us, judge and redeemer, teacher and friend, brother and Lord, we long to see Him also become for others.....

"We believe that all religious insight and experience have to be fully tested before God in Christ; and we see that this is true as well within as outside the Christian Church. Christ is revolutionary: He brings conversion and regeneration when we meet Him, from whatever point we may have started. Paul said: 'What things were gain to me, those counted I loss for Christ.'⁵⁵

The general tendency in this quotation is to regard the non-Christian religions as systems out of which men should be taken and placed into the Christian religion. And that is what they really are.

⁵⁵Op. cit., V. 12, 3, p. 249.

Man cannot be saved by a non-Christian religion. The moral achievements of the non-Christian can only be civil achievements, for a good work, in order to be acceptable in the eyes of God must be done by a child of His, a believer.

But how much may a Christian missionary build upon a new religion, i.e., what may he take out of the non-Christian religion as a point of contact? We agree with Dr. Kraemer that it is a dangerous thing to try to find points of contact between Christian and non-Christian religions, for then the convert might get a muddled picture of Christianity. But we must remember the case where the apostle Paul spoke before the Athenians (Acts 18, 23). St. Paul handled the case very tactfully, speaking to them of the unknown God, whom they worshipped ignorantly and whom Paul declared unto them. In this case, Paul did not take anything away from the Christian religion, he detracted no glory from God. We may then make that our motto in dealing with non-Christians religions--give up nothing of the Christian faith, and detract no glory from God.

The next section in the outline of the conference is The Inner Life of the Church. In this section the worship, education, ministry, social work, and training of missionaries was discussed.

The conference defined the term worship as the "Thankful response of sinful children to a holy forgiving Father."⁵⁶ This definition is not complete in defining what true worship is. Several elements are left out, for instance, those of devotion, adoration, worship and reverence. Their idea of the essence of worship is altogether false. Writing prior to the conference, W. F. France, the Overseas Secretary

⁵⁶ Religious Digest, V. 8, 42, p. 78.

for the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel, in an article on The Life of the Indigenous Church, says in the section on worship: "The full ideal of man's worship of God is an orchestra rather than a unison." He means thereby that in worshipping God, each man should worship Him as he knows Him, as in an orchestra each man plays his own particular instrument. This is not the way to worship God and it is not the kind of worship that God wants. God wants those that worship Him in spirit and in truth, and this can be done only in one way, not in various ways.

However, in the findings of the report of this section, we find that they were striving towards unity in worship:

"We further recommend that the International Missionary Council initiate the collection of service forms in current use, with accompanying translations, and that a library of such forms from many lands should be kept by National Christian Councils at the disposal of workers in their areas."⁵⁷

We notice that they also see the value of the unifying effect that uniform types of liturgies have upon the Church in general.

The value of the Christian home was also stressed by the conference. "No two institutions are so culturally close as Church and Home, and no two need each other so fundamentally."⁵⁸ This is the conclusion to which the group who considered the Christian home came to at Madras. They believed that the home is the underlying foundation in human society. Children have been given to the parents and, therefore, it is the first and foremost duty of the parents to see to it that their children are provided for and have the proper training and education. The home is the proper training ground for the

⁵⁷World Mission of the Church, p. 66f.

⁵⁸Op. cit., p. 69.

child. It should be a place of refuge from the evils of this world. To be this, the home must be a Christian home and it must be worthy. It must teach the children to know God and to know Him personally. And here it is the duty of the local church to give definite training and instruction to this end.

In the sphere of religious education it was the aim of the conference to give a Christian philosophy of life, to give an understanding of Jesus as Savior and Lord, to give an experience of fellowship with God, to develop a Christ-like character in its subjects, to improve the social order, and to gain the whole life of the subject for the work and worship of the Church. These aims are good. They are what the aims should be for Christian education everywhere. However, we would like to see the aim 'to give an understanding of Jesus as Savior and Lord' placed into the front rank and emphasized a little more. When a person understands that Jesus is his Savior, a Christian philosophy of life will automatically follow.

In all its teaching the church should place the Christian element first, especially in the elementary subjects. For whatever a man thinks, does, or says, he ought to do this in terms of Christian life and of the church to which he belongs. Christian education should be delegated to the local church wherever this church is strong enough to maintain educational mediums of its own. Each church should be then held responsible that it employ Christian teachers, who not only have the technical qualifications, but who also use every means to lead their pupils to live Christian lives.

The position of the conference with regard to those who were doing the teaching and instructing in the church was stated in a

report of the section who worked with The Indigenous Ministry of the Church, Both Lay and Ordained. In all its aspects, the ministry of the Church, both lay and ordained, is a pattern of the ministry of Christ. It is the will of God that there be a ministry in the Church who should administer both the Word and the Sacraments. For this purpose God has instituted the call by which the ministry is constituted. It would have been better had the conference been a little more explicit on this matter of the call. The call of the minister is to be "ratified by the choice, approval and commission of the church." We know that God leads the individual congregation to call that man whom He has designed to work in a specific place. The whole matter hinges on what meaning they place upon the word, "church." If this means to them a sort of hierarchy, or episcopacy, then their doctrine of the call is false, for God has left the power to call a minister in the hands of the individual congregation, and not in the hands of the superiors in the Church. The power of the keys has been given to the local congregation, and if this power is to be given to one person to exercise it publicly, then it is the right of the congregation, to whom this power has been given, to bestow this right upon one man.

The most important qualification for a minister, according to the conference, is a personal knowledge of God through Christ and wholehearted dedication to his service. Christian homes, Christian schools and colleges, are the recruiting grounds for prospective ministers. The present condition of theological education was thought to be one of the weakest points in the whole Christian enterprise, especially in the case of training for the ministry of the younger churches.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Religious Digest, V. 8, 42, p. 78f.

A special section was dedicated to the study of the place, work, and training of the missionary. Here are some of the findings which this section issued:

"Almost all the younger churches are dissatisfied with the present system of training for the ministry and with its results..... In many areas the churches are unable to bear the whole financial burden of (a highly trained) ministry.... In many countries it is difficult to secure a supply of gifted and consecrated candidates..... One of the difficulties by which we are faced is the large number of small, isolated and ill-staffed institutions, in which the standard of work is inevitably low.... It is our conviction that the present condition of theological education is one of the greatest weaknesses in the whole Christian enterprise."60

As grave as this situation is, nothing can be done about it except through the individual Mission Boards and churches making a face to face comprehensive study of the theological colleges and seminaries. Such a study should come face to face with the problems of the theological colleges and seminaries, especially the problems regarding their curricula, staff, and other resources. They were agreed on the fact that there was a need for three types of training;;the Bible school for preparation of lay workers, the theological school for the preparation of the ordained ministry, and the theological college for those who should receive advanced training in special forms of work. If these three types of training could be established and could function properly, it was felt that the problem of training workers for the mission field would be settled.

The work of the missionary also received a good deal of attention from the conference. It went on record stating that more theological workers were not only needed but also wanted. And the fact that they were also wanted is more remarkable when it is taken into consideration

⁶⁰ World Mission of the Church, pp. 78-85 passim.

that the demand for more workers came not from the sending countries, but from the lands of the younger churches themselves, as for instance from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Also included in the work of the missionaries was the task of serving as friendly helpers and colleagues of the national leaders of the missions directed by the churches. They should fill the need of being bridge builders between the older and the younger churches and thus serve to further the cause of the Church universal.⁶¹

Another topic discussed under the general head of education in the church was the subject of Christian literature. Missionaries were teaching the people to read and after having learned to read, there was nothing for the converts to read. In other words, the production of suitable Christian literature was hardly keeping pace with the progress that the younger churches were making in literacy. The problem presents a threefold difficulty: the scarcity of suitable writers, divergencies of views concerning what should be the subject matter, and finance. It certainly is not easy to find a man who can write on topics which will be interesting to the adult in language that is carefully graded. As regards the second point, people may agree on what should be placed in the literature of the primary stages, but that they should do so in advanced stages is asking too much for some people. Each school of thought will be anxious to produce its own views in literature. Producing Christian literature is not at all a profitable undertaking, in fact, it is a losing proposition. The copies must be sold at prices which are under cost, that they may be available to the lower classes of people.

⁶¹Christendom, V. 4, 2, p. 193.

Yet the production of Christian literature is an undertaking which is necessary for effective missionary work:

"There should be produced in every country material for missionary education, graded to meet the needs of children and young people; designed to make them conscious that there is a world Christian community of which they as Christians are members, and to acquaint them with the members of the Christian community who live in other countries."⁶²

The main purpose of Christian literature of course is to lead people along the way to heaven. To make them conscious of the fact that they live in a world Christian community and to acquaint them with other members of this world community is a matter of secondary importance. The chief piece of Christian literature, of course, is the Bible. The Scriptures have now been translated into a thousand tongues and are available to nine-tenths of the human race. However, less than one-fifth of the people actually possess the book, and most of the other people do not have the book either because they cannot afford it or they are not literate. For this reason, literacy campaigns ought to be advanced, and after the people have become literate, then it is our Christian duty to furnish them with the Word of God, gratis, if need be.

After having discussed matters which pertained to the Inner Life of the Church, the conference turned to conditions which are external to the church, discussing next, The Church and its Environment. Here finances took the first place. The preparatory work for the section on The Economic Factor in the Church was done by Dr. J. Merle Davis, the director of the Department of Social and Economic Research for the International Missionary Council. Dr. Davis compiled more factual

⁶²World Mission of the Church, p. 110.

material on this problem than has ever been assembled before, and, therefore the conference was able not only to surmise, but to say with definiteness which lines of progress were desirable and which were not.

The purpose of the discussion on finance was to develop the structure, program, and leadership of the Church in terms which are suitable to the economic supporting power of the people who are concerned. Dr. John R. Mott, in an article on The Tambaram Meeting and its Significance states: "This involves giving very special attention to the problems involved in raising the economic level of multitudes of impoverished Christians."⁶³ This is the duty of the state, not of the Church. The first duty of man to his impoverished fellow-man is to teach him the way to salvation, not to raise his economic level, and it is extremely dangerous for the Church to launch such a campaign for economic betterment, in view of the fact that it might lose sight entirely of the main purpose which it is to fulfill.

The points, however, which Dr. William Paton brings out in his article on The Meeting of the International Missionary Council at Tambaram Madras,⁶⁴ are good and worthy of mention. The first thing is that self-support must not become a fetish, for self-support is not the end toward which the Church is working. But on the other hand, dependence on foreign support must, wherever it is still necessary, be guarded, lest it develop into parasitism. When a church is able to support itself, it must do so, in order that missionary activity may branch out. The local church may remain independent, even though it is supported from abroad. The missionary in the Church

⁶³Christendom, V. 4, 2, p. 192.

⁶⁴International Review of Missions, B. 28, 110, pp. 161-173.

which is receiving foreign support, must adapt himself to the customs and manners of living which are prevalent there. Finally, the thing that will bring Christians closer to self-support than anything else is a spiritual approach to the problem of giving. These are points which we could well use in considering the missions of our own church.

The section that dealt with the Church and the Changing Social and Economic Order was much concerned about the Kingdom of God.

"The Kingdom of God is within history and yet it is beyond history. We cannot identify the Kingdom of God with a particular system, either the status quo or any revolutionary system we desire to bring about. If any of the present panaceas offered to man were realized, even in its pure form, it would not be the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God would still judge it, for the Kingdom is the ultimate order; all else is relative. We should, therefore, not become easily optimistic that material development here, and social progress there, are necessarily the coming of the Kingdom."⁶⁵

From this statement we can see that the idea of what the Kingdom of God is, is not clear in their minds. They are confusing first of all the kingdom of power and the kingdom of grace. Besides this, we notice that the emphasis is placed on the things of this world rather than the things that are to come. There was a delegation of Germans present who strongly objected to certain trends in this section which involved political and social judgments which is not within the province of the Church to make.

Many of their statements identify the Kingdom of God with a new order of living:

"A new birth for the individual and for society, by which men through the grace and power of Christ pass from the Kingdom of self to the Kingdom of God, would work itself out in a new order of living. The sacredness of human personality

⁶⁵ Watchman Examiner, V. 27, 5, p. 119.

would become a working fact, regardless of race or class. Every child would have equal opportunities with every other child; there would be a just distribution of the world's goods among the nations, and war would be repudiated as a means of settling international disputes."⁶⁶

These statements contain rank social Gospel. Get rid of the evil influences. Put man into a new society and he will become a moral being. Tear down the bars between capital and labor, put everyone on an equal basis--those are some of the things which they wish to accomplish through the Church. This in the fact of the statement of Christ: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6, 33.)

From social and economic evils the conference turned toward international evil in the section, The Church and the International Order. This problem arises because the various lands of the younger churches are at war with each other, as some of the lands of the older churches. War is not in line with Christian principles, but it is not the duty of the Church to prevent war. Reference has been made to the prophets of the Old Testament who preached moral reform to their kings. Those, however, were different times. God gave those prophets the express command to prophecy and to warn concerning secular and political evils. But nowhere has he given the preachers of the New Testament this command. Rather, his command has been to preach the Gospel, and that is the function which the ministers of the New Testament must fulfill.

In a discussion of The Church and the International Order we must also bring in the topic of the next section, Church and State, for the two are closely related. Those who say that it is the business of the Church to effect a new international order are mixing

⁶⁶Religious Digest, V. 8, 42, p. 80.

church and state, which we are taught in the Bible to keep separate. It is the duty of the state to maintain order, that of the church to save souls. But as clear as the Bible is on this point, there will always be people who wish to make use of the state to further religious causes.

One matter upon which we must agree, however, is their statement that man owes his final and absolute allegiance to God and to God alone. Certainly we should be loyal to the state in which we live. We must support it and fight for it though it means our death--that much we owe to the state. But there is a greater allegiance than this--the allegiance to God. We ought to obey God rather than men. We may die a temporal death for the state, but never an eternal death for it.

The last section--i.e., last on the list, but not last in the eyes of the delegates--dealt with Cooperation and Unity. This is the subject in which all of the delegates were most interested. The section was not divided into subheadings, as were all the other sections, but was discussed as one topic.

Tamparam was not the first world conference to encourage and support unity. In fact, according to Dr. Mott in The Tamparam Meeting and its Significance, the third stage of cooperation has been reached. The first stage was that prior to the Edinburgh Conference when there were isolated and separate pieces of cooperative effort. The second stage was that in which organizations began to develop, where united study, planning and action was fostered. During this period the International Missionary Council had its origin together with other National Christian Councils. The third stage has now been reached. This is the stage in which not only knowledge and experience, but also plans in the making, personalities, funds and administration will be pooled.

Since the Tambaram Meeting added nothing to religious doctrine, the main thing that is expected of the conference now is that it should be a great movement toward unity. The whole meeting seemed to issue one call--the call to closer cooperation. Dr. William Paton expresses this in an article, Looking Forward From the Tambaram. He adds that increased cooperation between the denominations has brought about a wider understanding of the situations which face the Church, but he decries the fact that the mechanism of the organization is still entirely denominational. To remedy this the entire existing practise must be altered, new types of administration must be inaugurated, and decisions of progress must be left to an inter-denominational body.

This sounds fine. It states an ideal. But the question whether this will work out in practice still remains. To offset this argument, he cites two cases in which joint missions have already been begun, the United Mission in Mesopotamia, and the United Missions in the Copper Belt of Northern Rhodesia. But let us examine these two cases. Both of these missions are in the Islam field, and the work done there has ^{not} been very extensive. Under these conditions we can well imagine that a system of cooperation would work out in practise, since there are not many men who are affected thereby, and it is always easy for a few men to work together jointly, than it is for a greater number to do so.

The field of church discipline offers another problem to those who would have more cooperation, and this very question was considered by the Council.

"We desire to lay special stress on the urgency of the need for cooperation in the vital matter of church discipline. An agreed practice among the churches is needed in regard

to the treatment of Christians who are under discipline. It is imperative that there should be common action with regard to marriage customs and other practices, which are bound up with the social structure of the people to whom the Gospel is presented. Unless a common standard and common action can be maintained here, Christian levels of family life and social relationship must deteriorate."⁶⁷

But can a standard actually be reached? Not without a compromise on certain doctrines by various of the church denominations.

Something must be given in here, in order to bring about unity.

But compromise is not what they are looking for:

"It is wrong to assume, as some have, that this unity was achieved along the road of compromise.... It was seen that compromise would satisfy no one.... We respected each other more, and found closer unity, in disagreement than in compromise."⁶⁸

Continuing again with the paper of Dr. William Paton, we find that he states that those who believe in cooperation do so not merely on practical grounds, but because they believe that unity is the only hope for the Christian religion. The unity of the Church should not consist in this that it is a cooperation of separated bodies. He realizes that cooperation under the existing circumstances is a difficult thing. It would be easy merely to get together on a few matters which are not vital in themselves, but for churches which are widely apart to unite is a great difficulty.⁶⁹

We agree with Dr. Paton that the ideal is to have a united church. That is what Christ wants His Church here on earth to be. And that is what the invisible church really is--a united body in Christ of all believers of all times. But Dr. Paton was speaking of the visible church, and, therefore, we shall confine our remarks to the visible body.

⁶⁷World Mission of the Church, p. 152.

⁶⁸International Review of Missions, V. 28, 111, p. 339.

⁶⁹Op. cit., V. 28, 112, pp. 491-500.

What a wonderful thing it would be if all the denominations could get together on a common ground and work together against the forces of sin and hell! What an impression that would make upon the world! Such a condition would greatly further the cause of missions. It was especially the younger churches that were crying for unity. The younger churches cannot understand the divisions and the multiplied organizations of the mother churches. If they are all Christian, why are they not united?

For all the expressions of unity that we find in the Madras Conference, it cannot be said that there actually was a unity of spirit present. Regarding Dr. Kraemer's book, A Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, the book which was the foundation for the entire conference, there was no unity. In two matters which the book discussed which have a very vital significance, the interpretations of the uniqueness of the Christian faith, and the absolute contrast between the Christian faith and the non-Christian religions, there was wide disagreement. Not even a third of the leaders who were present accepted Dr. Kraemer's views in their entirety. The rest still clung to the findings of the Jerusalem Conference, holding that there are good points in the non-Christian religions from which starting points can be made in teaching them the rudiments of Christianity.

There were also great differences between the delegates on theological positions. There was a great difference of opinion on eschatological problems, some German Christians holding that the Church must function with the eschatological hope in view, while others, of a more liberal school--Dr. T. C. Chao in particular--held that the main interest of the Church must be focused on the things of this life. Dr. Chao, in his article, A Chinese Delegate

Looks at Tambaram, pushes the coming of Christ into the background, holding that if the event of Christ's coming is in the distant future, then there is no sense in placing more stress upon that event at the present time, when the Church ought to be thinking of things which concern it immediately.

Thus we see that in spite of the claims of unity which were made at Tambaram, no true unity exists. And no true unity will exist in the future if the basis for unity is to be a common effort for external unity. These people have different foundations. No two things will ever be united as long as they stand upon different foundations. Rationalism cannot be used as a foundation, for there are so many ways in which rationalism may manifest itself. Too many men have different opinions on the same subject.

The only way for true unity to be effected in the Church is to do what the Madras Conference stated they would do and did not do-- that is, to return to the Bible and to use it as a foundation for unity. There must be unity in doctrine before there can be unity in external organization. This is what the Madras Conference overlooked. And that is why they have no, and will have no true unity.

Why did not we Lutherans of the Missouri Synod attend this conference? We are a missionary church and should certainly be interested in furthering the cause of missions. We are interested in doing this, but there were other factors which kept us from attending the conference. In the first place, the churches which attended this conference do not hold to Scripture as the only source and norm of doctrine. They are all infested with rationalism and, therefore, they have deviated from the truth. This has been manifested in the discussion on the section, The Faith by Which the Church Lives.

A second reason why we have not joined with them is that they are mixing church and state in this that they concern themselves with problems which are not in the sphere of the Church.

Another reason, and this is the chief reason, is that it would have been a unionistic move to have attended the Madras Conference. If we would have attended, it would have been a sign that we were in doctrinal agreement with the delegates who attended and with the findings that were issued there. We are forbidden by our Lord and Master to do this. He has told us: "Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." (Rom. 16, 17.) And "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" (II Cor. 6, 14.)

What are we to think of the Conference then? We must consider this an age in which men are banding themselves together in organizations, not into inconsequential clubs, but into world-wide conferences and councils. The group that was behind the Madras Conference was the International Missionary Council. At the present time another international body is being formed, the World Council of Churches. And there are other organizations in the Church which have taken on world-wide character. There is the World Council on Faith and Order, the World Conference on Life and Work, the World Conference of Christian Youth, and others too numerous to mention.

Before this age of organization, there was already enough confusion in the Protestant Church. But with these new organizations springing up, the situation will become much worse. Degeneration of sects seems to be drawing near. And what will be the outcome of such degeneration? The general trend at Madras was downward, instead of

upward along the path to a more perfect Christianity, as is shown by the arbitrary way in which they treat Scripture, and the efforts made for unity at any cost. Modernists are in the places of leadership in these organizations. If the tendency to decline continues, the whole organization if it becomes a unit, may be swayed to the side of the radical leader, and the elements of Christianity will continue to disappear.

It is well that our church should take a warning from this situation. God will not tolerate deviation from His Word. We recall the words of Paul to the Jews: "It is necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you, but seeing ye have put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." (Acts 13, 46.) Christianity, from its beginning, has been travelling westward--Palestine, Asia Minor, Rome, Germany, America. Will it continued to travel and leave this country as it left those who rejected it?

The answer to this question lies with us. If we allow modernism and unionism to make inroads upon us, we too shall suffer that fate. But if we hold fast to the true and faithful word, taking our doctrine and life from it and from it alone, we shall possess Christianity and its blessings forever. For where the Word is preached in its truth and purity, there Christians will always be found.

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